

D - DAY: 55 YEARS AGO

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FRANCK PREVEL / The Associated Press

Returning again: An American soldier watches the re-enactment of D-Day landings at Omaha beach, Normandy, France, early Saturday. Troops and WWII veterans celebrated the 55th anniversary of the Allied offensive that gave troops a foothold in France during World War II.

Veterans gather in Normandy to mark D-Day

COLLEVILLE-SUR-MER, France (AP) — On the eve of the 55th anniversary of D-Day, U.S. troops re-enacted an amphibious landing Saturday in northern France as part of commemorations of World War II battles.

The landing was staged by active duty soldiers on

Omaha Beach, the deadliest of the D-Day beachheads.

Also Saturday, paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division jumped over the La Fiere Bridge, and officials later laid wreaths and held a service at the American Cemetery on Omaha Beach.

Some 6,603 Americans were killed along the coast

of France in the D-Day invasion of Nazi-held Europe.

Thousands of veterans from several nations are to take part in this weekend's commemorations across northern France.

On Sunday, U.S. Rangers from the 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment will scale the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc.

U.S. Ambassador Felix Rohatyn and Gen. Wesley Clark, NATO's top commander in Europe, are expected to participate in Sunday's ceremony.

Officials at the Normandy American Cemetery on Omaha Beach estimate that 1,000 U.S. veterans will be present, along with some 1,500 family members.

